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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 726
By Crowe

A RESOLUTION to recognize "The Wataugans" as Tennessee's
finest Historical Outdoor Drama.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the elected officials of the state of Tennessee should pause to pay tribute to those noteworthy organizations and events that have significantly contributed to preserving the history and heritage of our great state; and

WHEREAS, "The Wataugans" is unquestionably this state's finest outdoor historical drama; this exceptional play has been celebrated and performed annually, during the month of July, for 21 consecutive years; and

WHEREAS, The Watauga Historical Association and the Sycamore Shoals State Historic Area present the drama; this esteemed production is the only historical drama and the longest running drama of any kind in the state of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, gifted local volunteers come together near the actual site where these historical events actually occurred and depict important episodes in early Northeast Tennessee history; the play celebrates the lives of the people who shaped the heritage of this great state and country; and

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WHEREAS, the historical drama delineates the Wataugans' trials and tribulations; Cherokee attacks, harvest celebrations, and threats from British loyalists are skillfully portrayed by the cast members who are adorned in authentic costume; and

WHEREAS, the Watauga community at Sycamore Shoals was established as the first permanent American settlement outside the 13 colonies; and

WHEREAS, on the banks of the Watauga River, in May 1772, these settlers compiled and affirmed the Articles of the Watauga Association, thus establishing the first system of American democratic government independent of British rule; and

WHEREAS, in March 1775, the Wataugans hosted a council between Judge Richard Henderson and the chiefs of the Cherokee Nation; Henderson, by means of the Transylvania Company, eventually purchased over 20 million acres of land from the Cherokee, which comprised much of the present states of Kentucky and Tennessee; this is the largest land transaction ever recorded; and

WHEREAS, on September 25, 1780, 1100 fighting men gathered at Sycamore Shoals and the next day marched over the mountains in search of Patrick Ferguson and his Tory militia; and

WHEREAS, on October 7, 1780, in the famous battle of King's Mountain (South Carolina) these brave Overmountain Men, led by Colonels John Sevier and Isaac Shelby, emerged victorious against the British militia; the colonials' victory at King's Mountain is considered a crucial link in a chain of events that led to the eventual surrender of the British forces during the Revolutionary War; and

WHEREAS, had it not been for the brave Wataugans who were seeking a better life for themselves and their families, and who were willing to fight for their future as well as ours, the great state of Tennessee, as we know it today, would not exist; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate for this General Assembly to praise and commend the role “The Wataugans” and its producers and performers have played in preserving and venerating the panoramic history of this great state; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That we hereby commend “The Wataugans,” honoring this outstanding play as the finest Historical Outdoor Drama in the state of Tennessee, and extend to the play's producers and performers our best wishes in all of their future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.